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A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
California School-Book Monopoly.

AN EARLY SCHOOL-BOOK.

THE New England Primer has been often mentioned as the first popular school-book published in the United States. For nearly two hundred years large numbers of children commenced their education in the book which taught that

*In Adam's fall
We sinned all,*

and furnished pictures of the various saints and sinners with alphabetical names from Adam to Zacheus to match the accompanying doggerel. Many gray-haired men of the present generation have carefully counted the children of the Rev. John Rogers at the stake to see whether the "one at the breast" was included in the nine, or whether there were really ten.

This little book was in publication as early as 1691 in substantially the same form as it retained as late as 1887, when it was republished as a

curiosity. It was printed before there existed any law for the protection of an author's right to the sole use of his thoughts in published form. The book was reprinted by any printer who chose to get ready the necessary portraits of Adam and Zacheus, and the intervening worthies. It was sold at prices varying according to the supply and demand in different localities, and the children labored over its pages until they were able to take up the Bible itself as the next book of the graded series.

AMERICAN SCHOOL-BOOKS.

Shortly, arithmetics were reprinted from English books of that day. Murray's Grammar appeared, and about the date of the formation of this Government there was a grand general movement, which was the foundation of the present supply of text-books for American schools. Webster undertook to reform the language in spelling and structure. Morse, the ancestor of the inventor of the telegraph, published his American Geography. The Patriot's Monitor appeared, and the American school-book, as a distinguishing element of American Education, came into existence. In these early days the school-book business was scattered widely over the country. Small printing-offices in country towns issued single books, which served to keep the apprentices busy.

In time, certain books proved their special value. Some became known throughout wide areas, and their publication became a special business. The publishing offices were set up in the larger cities, and machinery was introduced for the manufacture. The history of education is interwoven at every step with the history of text-book production and publication. The business of preparing such books as should be suited to the wants of future years required an accurate insight into the present systems and the present tendencies. The best talents of the wisest men were employed in their preparation. Enterprising and far-sighted publishers strained every nerve to procure the best books, and under the protection of a copyright law could safely venture fortunes in the hope of procuring such books as should outstrip all competitors.

As school systems became better organized, it was found necessary, from motives of economy, to divide the schools and grade the pupils according to their several acquirements. This also made it necessary that similar books should be used in the schools of each town. The idea of uniformity of books arose from the necessities of graded schools.

GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY.

In common with all other forms of business enterprise, the publishers of school-books used every form of advertisement to push their wares.

Even the early newspapers of the colonial days advertised school-books. As the trade increased with the development of school systems, traveling agents were employed to present the merits of various books. The competition became active and violent. Until limits were placed upon the powers of Boards of Education by appropriate laws, changes were frequent and unnecessary. But this evil brought the remedy. Most States passed laws fixing the time which must elapse before a book could be changed. Yet the competition between the more successful publishing houses reached such a pitch that they themselves were alarmed at the zeal of their own agents, and the people were incensed at the continued strife involved in book wars.

Meanwhile books had increased vastly in costliness of production. The competition had covered every item of book manufacture until the most perfect possible manuscript, the work of years of labor and toil, and derived from years of previous experience on the part of the author, was placed in a form equal to the most expensive and elaborate productions of the printing-press and bindery.

The best designs from celebrated artists were engraved with the utmost care. The choice of type and selection of paper was the work of experts in these several lines. The printing itself became the best of its class in the world. No other nation in the world has been supplied

with so well prepared and well made school-books as the United States, and the selling price of each successive issue was lower than the one preceding it.

In no instance, except during the disturbance of all our business during the war, has there been an example of increase of price on the part of any publisher. The sharp competition forbade any such gains. The same competition gradually made the business unprofitable except in the case of the largest producers.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

At various times, associations of the trade have been formed. About the year 1870 an association was formed that included all or nearly all the book trade, including publishers of miscellaneous books as well as school-books. It undertook to regulate the competition as between publishers, jobbers, and retailers. It never controlled prices or production, and never had any real control of the business. It was merely a society for the discussion of business methods. It had no perceptible effect in lessening the evils of which all complained, and was dissolved entirely in 1877.

SCHOOL-BOOK WARS.

Among school-book publishers the war broke out; every man's hand was raised against his

neighbor. Every town and city was assailed by competing agents, whose aim was to create dissatisfaction with the books in use, and place their own series in the schools. The publishers were not always able to control their agents. In such sharp contests human passions often ran away with prudence. The press was invoked to aid in the efforts to beat one another down, and public scandals were the consequence.

Some of the larger houses met and formed another association, which had for its sole object the restraint of agents in the field. Every firm belonging to the association was free to make such books as it pleased, at any price, and at as large discount as it pleased. There was no obligation restraining them from displacing other books, even of those belonging to the association, provided the change did not come from the active solicitation of an agent. The houses themselves could offer their books everywhere freely, and the people were left free to select and choose, or to retain what they had in use. But all houses did not join this association. Some for one cause and some for another remained outside, and kept agencies at work on the old plan—to get all possible, and in any possible way. Some of the agents of the firms not in the association, aiming to profit by the general prejudice existing against combination intended to limit competition and increase the profits of producers, raised against the association the cry

of *Syndicate*, and the association was soon known as the School-book Syndicate. Although the agreement has become entirely public, and the falsity of the charge has been fully shown, the activity of the agents who aim to profit by such misstatements is so great that much popular discontent was created.

It was from the violent struggles of the various publishing houses for patronage of the schools of California, and especially from the effort of a local house to start in the business, that the peculiar legislation of California arose.

HOW IT STARTED.

Until the year 1882, the schools of the State were open to a competition which at that time reached such a stage as to be ruinous to publishers, and injurious to the public generally.

The laws had been frequently changed, and it was asserted that such changes were made to favor one party or the other in the contest. The newspaper press took an active interest in the struggles. Slanders were scattered abroad involving the good name of the contestants on every side, and the popular mind was infected with the idea that the school-book business was a bonanza, "with millions in it."

The time was ripe for any scheme for taking up new enterprises by the aid of State taxation. Denis Kearney was the great statesman and

orator of the day, and his virulent and senseless harangues to the mob collected on the "sand lots" in San Francisco, were taken for oracles. His baseless assertions were echoed by the press and accepted as facts by some people, and soon discussions arose whether the State might not assume the preparation and publication of all the school-books for the State.

A POLITICAL CONVENTION.

The first practical step in the way of setting up a State monopoly in school-books was taken in a political convention held in the summer of 1882. One of the delegates to that convention has told the story with much humor and force in the *Overland Monthly*.* The customary plank in the party platform expressive of the profound faith which the party has in the public schools, had been accidentally omitted. The railroads had been denounced; Sunday had been provided for as a day of rest. All the large corporations and the oblique-eyed Chinese had been abused in general terms of legal and illegal phraseology. The platform was referred back to the committee for amendment, and for the insertion of the clause on the public schools. During the recess, the author of a school-book resolution that had been smothered in the committee, got hold of one of the leaders of the convention and told him the sad story of his purchase of a big bill of school-

*July, 1888.

books. When the convention re-assembled, this leader reported the following resolution:

"The * * * * Party demands that the public schools shall receive generous support as the policy of free government; that education, from the primary school to the State university, shall be free, and within the reach of the children of every citizen; and in furtherance of this principle we recommend to the legislature the establishment of some system by which the State should print and provide the principal reading and other text books used in the public schools, supplying the same to pupils at actual cost."

The able leader made a speech, in which he portrayed the hardships of the poor laboring man, and denounced the extortion and greed of "heartless monopolists," who were robbing him, moved the adoption of the resolution committing the party to the policy of manufacturing the school-books for the State. It was carried with a thunder of applause. The other party had already held its convention and made its platform. It could not "see this and go one better," but a city convention was held in San Francisco in which the party pledged itself in favor of "free books"; but this was so clearly stolen thunder that no attention was paid to it.

THE SAND-LOT CAMPAIGN.

During the campaign ensuing, the publishers engaged in the supply of school-books were one

of the customary marks at which loud-mouthed sand-lotters shot off fiery speeches full of figures of astounding length and magnitude. The paltry annual supply of the State, amounting to \$40,000, was swelled by these orators into millions, with profits ten times larger than the whole amount paid for books by the people of the State. Yet the party having the text-book plank was beaten by an increased plurality of 20,000 votes at the polls, the total plurality against it being over 23,000.

HOW THE STATE PRINTER GOT IN HIS WORK.

Notwithstanding the defeat of the party advocating this scheme at the general election in 1882, the legislature took action by submitting a constitutional amendment to the people. The legislature was induced to do this by an estimate made by the State Printer. This estimate was framed in accordance with a resolution passed in the winter of 1883 directing J. J. Ayers, the State Printer, "to institute an inquiry into the cost of compiling and publishing free text-books in common schools, of readers, histories, arithmetics, and spelling-books, and to report the result of such inquiry at an early day." The State Printer evidently saw that such a scheme would be a "good thing" for himself, as he had nearly four years of official life before him. He could

hardly suppress his exuberant joy at the prospect of such a job. He went to San Francisco and learned all about the business in a week or so, and returned to Sacramento with his report, which was made February 20, 1883.

This report stated that "as far as the setting up and printing the text-books are concerned, the State Printing Office is now nearly capable of doing the work. The only additional machinery required would be two more Hoe stop-cylinder presses, or one of the latest improved Hoe perfecting presses. The additional type required would only be such as would be necessary to sort up the cases to meet the exigencies of special matter in the arithmetic—a mere trifle."

THE TRIFLES GROW.

The "mere trifles" of expense expanded with the State Printer's knowledge of the requirements of the school-book business. In his report of expenditures made three years later, September 1, 1886, he said:

"The Act also provided that the binding for the State (theretofore let out by contract) should be done in the State Printing Office building by the Superintendent of State Printing. This involved an almost entire reorganization of the establishment. A new boiler and a new engine, of greater capacity than was before needed, were made to replace the old ones. An extension of the engine building was made in which to house the new boiler. The floors of the lower story were let

down the entire length of the building, placing the engine and boiler rooms and the press room on an even plane; and artificial stone flooring was substituted for the wood. The foundation for each of the large presses was set deep, and carefully built up in the most solid and durable manner. The third story of the building, which had been left in an unfinished state, was fitted up at great expense for the bindery; and the west half of the lower floor, which had been used by the Adjutant-General of the State for the storage of cannons, guns, etc., was turned into an electrotyping room. All these extensive and radical changes involved a large expenditure out of the fund appropriated for the new work devolved upon this department by the Act of February 26, 1885, and incidentally and of necessity, a considerable intrenchment upon the fund appropriated for the support of the State Printing Office proper."

It will be seen by a comparison of his estimate of a "mere trifle" and his report of the result, that he expended \$57,917.39* to put the printing office in shape to commence the work of printing school-books.

But this is not the worst result that came directly from State Printer Ayers' "estimate" and the actual results.

He promised the legislature that he would manufacture books for one half or even one third the price at which books were then sold in the State of California. Here are his

* From the State Printer's Report, made to the legislature in 1887. It contains the itemized expenses of the plant and includes items of several hundred dollars spent by the Public Printer on a trip East to learn his trade.

"ESTIMATED" PRICES:

Speller	8.126 cents.
First Reader	9.286 "
Second Reader	17.920 "
Third Reader	24.244 "
Arithmetic	28.891 "
Grammar	20.167 "
History	29.658 "

Please note the wonderful seeming accuracy of this estimate, which is carried out to the thousandth part of a cent!

In order to show the saving that the State would make by the new system, the State Printer prepared the following table:

COMPARATIVE COST OF BOOKS.

NAME OF BOOK.	State Cost.	Present Retail Cost.	Difference in favor of State.
Speller	\$0 08 $\frac{1}{8}$	\$0 18	\$0 09 $\frac{7}{8}$
First Reader	09 $\frac{1}{4}$	20	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Second Reader	18	50	32
Third Reader	24 $\frac{1}{4}$	85	60 $\frac{3}{4}$
Arithmetic	28 $\frac{3}{4}$	1 00	70 $\frac{1}{4}$
Grammar	20 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 05	84 $\frac{3}{4}$
History	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 25	95 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total	\$1 38 $\frac{1}{8}$	\$5 03	\$3 64 $\frac{7}{8}$

It will be observed that the only claim that was ever made for this scheme for a State

Monopoly on school-books, is cheapness. No one ever claimed that such books would be better than those already in the market.

State Printer Ayers figured out a saving of some thousands of dollars if the State would set him up in business. No other evidence was called for. No inquiry was made as to whether either of the estimated prices was true, or whether the apparent saving was not more than compensated by losses in other directions.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

The legislature passed a resolution submitting a constitutional amendment to the people. The argument and estimate prepared by the State Printer furnished the basis for arguments in favor of the scheme, and the sand-lotters were still active in politics. In 1884 the amendment was adopted, and was in terms as follows:

“ SECTION 7. The Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Principals of the State Normal Schools, shall constitute the State Board of Education, and shall compile, or cause to be compiled, and adopt a uniform series of text-books for use in the common schools throughout the State. The State Board may cause such text-books, when adopted, to be printed and published by the Superintendent of State Printing at the State Printing Office, and when so printed and published to be distributed and sold at the cost price of printing, publishing, and distributing the same. The text-books so adopted shall continue in use not less than four years; and said State Board shall perform

such other duties as may be prescribed by law. The Legislature shall provide for a Board of Education in each county in the State. The County Superintendents and the County Boards of Education shall have control of the examination of teachers, and the granting of teachers' certificates within their respective jurisdictions."

THE FIRST APPROPRIATION.

At the next meeting of the legislature, in the winter of 1884-5, a bill was passed to carry into effect the requirements of the new amendment. It was approved February 26, 1885. This bill was prepared by the Senate Committee on Education in conjunction with the State Superintendent of Education, who now became an active agent in the scheme. The State Printer's ideas had enlarged, and his "mere trifle" of expense was swollen by an estimate, dated December 9, 1884, to \$115,000.00 for type, presses, machinery, and labor.

STATE PRINTER'S ESTIMATE AFTER HE GOT THE LAW.

Two power presses, 35 by 51, or larger	\$13,000
Boiler, engine, shafting, etc.	5,000
Binding	10,000
Electrotyping apparatus	5,000
Types	2,500
Engravings for books	3,000
Alterations in bindings	2,000
Elevator from press to binding room	1,000
Plumbing, extra work, etc	2,000
 Total	 \$43,500

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LABOR, MATERIAL, ETC.

Paper, 5,000 reams, supersized and 60-lb.	
book.	\$36,000
Stock for binding	7,500
Pay-roll for electrotyping department,	
one year	2,500
Pay-roll for compositors on books . . .	2,500
Pay-roll for press room	3,500
Cost of fuel.	1,000
Inks, oil, etc.	1,000
Cases for shipment of books, etc. . . .	2,500
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Total	\$71,500
The plant.	\$43,500
Labor, material, etc	<u>71,500</u>
<hr/>	
Grand total	\$115,000

FAILURE TO FIND AUTHORS.

The legislature, with great zeal, appropriated \$150,000 for the State Printer's part of the job, and also appropriated \$20,000 to be expended by the State Board of Education in compiling books. Complaint was made at the outset by the friends of the scheme, and especially by those who expected to profit by it, that the law was "seriously defective"; but the appropriation was not suffered to lapse. As soon as the funds were in hand, the State Board appointed a "Managing Editor," who really seems to have been about the only sane, honest, and capable man employed in the preparation of the manuscript. "They then

called upon the intending authors to furnish the manuscripts of the several works, or else portions of the same, with full presentations of their schemes. Many were sent in, but there was a general complaint against the short time allowed, and, in fact, this was a reasonable complaint. All the works prepared were rejected save a series of three readers, presented as a gift to the State by Mr. H. C. Kinne, of San Francisco."* These were made over by the Managing Editor, and published. "It was found at once that the State could not depend on the volunteer labor of teachers for the preparation of manuscripts."† The State was not full of teachers who had time and ability to prepare text-books for the State in connection with their regular work. The State Board of Education, "in view of their want of success with authors for the community at large, became convinced that it was necessary to undertake the work themselves."‡

THEY MAKE MORE BOOKS.

It will be noticed that the Constitutional Amendment provides for certain work. The law passed February 26, 1885, specified that the series to be prepared should consist of three readers, one speller, one arithmetic, one grammar, one history of the United States, and one

* 12th Report of State Superintendent, p. 34.

† *Ibid.*, p. 35.

‡ 12th Report, p. 35. *Chronicle*, Feb. 18, 1886.

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geography; but this Board of Education provided that the series shall consist of—

3 Readers, 900 pp., to cost	\$4,000
1 Speller.	500
2 Arithmetics and	
1 Supplementary Book }	3,000
2 Language Lessons, }	
1 Grammar, }	3,000
1 History of the U. S., 400 pp.	5,000
1 Physiology, 200 pp.	2,500
1 Music Book, 100 pp.	250
1 Industrial Drawing, 100 pp.	100
1 Book of Morals and Manners, 500 pp.	1,000
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Total cost of Manuscripts	\$19,850

The list contains nine books not authorized by the law, and omits the Geography entirely.

The report quoted from gives the names of ten persons who were engaged in the preliminary work, not counting the State Printer, Mr. Ayers, and other employes of the State Office.

The Speller which was prepared by Mr. Kinne was one which had been prepared by him some years before, and for which he found no market. This was soon shoved through the press, and, within three years after the inauguration of the scheme, it appeared. The three readers followed before the close of the year 1887.

At their first appearance, the Board fixed their cost as the law requires. After figuring *out* all the cost of machinery possible, and dividing and

apportioning a large part of the expense as being ordinary State work, they concluded that the actual cost to the State was as follows:

COMPARATIVE TABLE.

	Cost when Issued.	Original Estimate.
Speller,	\$0 20	\$0 08½
First Reader.	15	09¼
Second Reader.	30	18
Third Reader	40	24¼

It is interesting just here to see how this compares with the *estimate* of the State Printer on which this whole monopoly was built. These figures follow the actual (?) cost. He came within about 100 per cent of meeting his estimate.

The Speller which he estimated at 8½ cents was then sold at 236 per cent of that amount, and yet the State lost money on it.

NO WAY PROVIDED FOR DISTRIBUTION.

But when the books were published there was no way provided to sell them. The law had been arranged so that no profit was to be made on them. These "cost prices" were to be also the retail prices. How was a man in San Francisco to get a Speller costing 20 cents at Sacramento? The puzzle came near stopping the whole scheme. Up to March 24, 1887, only 8,554 books had been sold. The books went out as

mere curiosities. It was contrary to law to sell them outside of the State lines, but a few escaped. The character of the books was not such as to create any demand for them when other books could be legally used. The Superintendent, in his report for the year 1886, boasts of the "triumphant success" of the scheme, and compared the figured cost of the State series of *three* books with the retail price of the usual series of *six* books; but he forgot to compare this "triumphant success" with the promised cheapness given by the State Printer before the law was passed.

"MISSING" FUNDS.

The so-called cost price of the State Series at Sacramento corresponds with the publishers' net prices, that is, the prices that publishers sell their books at to large jobbers, or to States, counties, or districts authorized to purchase books. When these prices are honestly compared with the California prices, it will be seen that no element of cheapness remains as an argument in favor of this scheme of State publication.* Instead of saving money they had simply organized an enormous State monopoly in school-books, and placed the entire manufacture in the hands of

*The Topeka *Capital*, in an article in the issue of February 4, 1887, from the President of the Board of Education, gave the actual price of the three California Readers as \$1.10, while the books actually used in Topeka schools of the same grade cost only 89 cents retail.

men who knew nothing whatever about the business. They are not even able (if they are willing) to ascertain the actual cost of manufacturing the books. Already the books show that some \$23,000 is missing, and the only explanation offered is that the books have been sold at less than actual cost. The Board has, therefore, at a later meeting, reported in the July (1887) number of the *Pacific Educational Journal*, page 233, fixed the cost prices as follows:

HOW THE PRICES HAVE BEEN RAISED.

	Present Price.	First Price.	Original Estimate.
Speller	\$0 25	\$0 20	\$0 08½
First Reader . . . . .	.15	.15	9¼
Second Reader . . . . .	.33	.30	.18
Third Reader . . . . .	.54	.40	24¼
Primary Arithmetic.	.20	..	..
Advanced Arithmetic	.42	..	..
Grammar . . . . .	.42	..	..
U. S. History	<u>.70</u>	..	..
		<u>\$3 01</u>	

Here is an average advance on the original estimate, of eighty-three per cent on the price at which the books were issued, and an advance of twenty per cent on that price in the second year of their issue. What would be thought of a private publishing house that would advance its prices twenty per cent in a single year? When has there been any advance in prices since the

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year 1866? The active competition between publishers has made an average decline of fully twenty per cent in school-books in the past ten years. The prices quoted above as those of July, 1887, are the present *cost prices* as shown by the State circular; but no one can get the books at this price unless he goes to Sacramento and offers the cash at the Public Printing Office for the books, and he can't get them then unless he is an official in the schools or a dealer who has signed a contract to sell at State prices and agreed not to sell to any one out of the State. In such a case he can get a book at the prices quoted above. If he is merely a private citizen of this unfortunate State, and has a child who wants a book, he must either send the cash to Sacramento with the postage for the return of the book, or he must go to a licensed and authorized book-seller and pay larger prices. These are as follows:

PRICES OF BOOKS.*

	By Mail.	From Retailers.
Speller	\$0 31	\$0 30
First Reader	20	20
Second Reader	41	40
Third Reader	66	65
Primary Arithmetic	25	25
Advanced Arithmetic	50	50
Grammar	50	50
U. S. History	82	80

* From the circular issued by the State Board of Education.

TWO LIES DO NOT MAKE A TRUTH.

These prices will not strike any one as being anything in the way of a "triumphant success" in the line of cheapness. The books are mean enough; but not cheap. Out of the dozens of Spellers in the market there is not one that generally retails for *more* than twenty-five cents. Yet a State official had the effrontery to state, in an interview given in the San Francisco *Daily Times* of September 16, 1886, that such a book by a "regular publisher" would cost a school district ninety cents! That is the method by which this monopoly is bolstered up before the people. With a lie at the basis of the law as to the price which the promised books would cost, and another lie at the end as to the cost of similar books, they make a very fine showing.

THE FUN OF A REVOLVING FUND.

Section 7 of the law passed February 26, 1885, and under which these books have been made, provides that the several counties and cities of the State shall provide a "revolving fund" for the purpose of enabling the County Superintendent to purchase the text-books. It is made the duty of the Board of Supervisors to see that this is done.* The law does not specify what amount shall be raised. But on the 28th of Sep-

* Wm. T. Welcker's Report for 1886, page 36.

tember, 1886, Superintendent Moulder, of San Francisco, called upon the Board of Supervisors to provide a revolving fund, and he thought that \$10,000 would do at first to purchase the First Reader and Speller, which were all that were then out. At this rate the whole series would cost fully \$70,000 for this one county. This is nearly double what all the school-books of the State cost in the year 1883, according to the Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for that year. He estimated that all the school-books for California, including geographies, cost "not to exceed \$40,000 per annum." But San Francisco is but a part of the State. If \$70,000 would be needed for the revolving fund of that county, some \$200,000 would be required by the State, as San Francisco embraces only about one third of the population.

Thus, while the books are no cheaper than the books of private publishers not protected by monopolistic laws, the expense of the State in distributing them will require the raising of sums four times as great as the annual expense required to supply the State under free and open competition.

OFFICIAL RED TAPE.

On the 12th of October, 1886, the Superintendent of Public Instruction sent out a circular headed

"STATE TEXT-BOOKS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY."

and in it Mr. Welcker calls the attention of County Superintendents "to the fact that the law providing for the publication of school text-books does not contemplate their sale by dealers at a profit. . . . Therefore all orders which do not direct that the books shall be sent to the address of the Superintendent himself, should state for what schools or for what individual use they are designed."

There seems to be a morbid fear on the part of Mr. Welcker that some one might get hold of a book and make ten cents on it; but where he would sell it does not appear. These mailing prices are no lower than are common from other publishers who have not a State monopoly.

We venture to say that any publishing house in this country could print and publish the California series, sell them at the State prices, and make as much money as they now do on their own books. This is evident because the prices are no lower than current prices of popular books—indeed, some of them are much higher, as is the case with the Speller. Webster's old Elementary Speller is a much better book than the one presented by Mr. Kinne to the State Board of California, and you can buy two of them at any country store for the price of the California monopoly book at the door of the Printing Office in Sacramento.

THE SECOND APPROPRIATION.

The latest reports of expenditures by the Board and by the State Printer pertain to the first appropriation, which was all used up in making the Speller, the three Readers, and doing some unfinished work on the remaining books.

In the spring of 1887 the legislature considered the Printer's estimate for continuing the work. State Printer Shioaff took Ayers' place January 20, 1887, and there was at once a general inquiry as to frauds and peculation in the State Printing Office. The new Superintendent reported that the salaries of state officials engaged solely on the text-book work had been charged to the general expense of public printing, thus lessening the *apparent* cost of the books, and making a "shortage" of only some \$23,000.*

On the 6th of February, 1887, the legislature appropriated as follows:

FOR THE PUBLICATION OF 50,000 EACH OF

Elementary Arithmetic, Elementary Grammar	
Elementary Physiology	\$25,000
Compilation of text-books	15,000
Pay of employes	104,000
Stock and materials	36,000
Fire-proof building for storage	10,000
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Total	\$190,000

* San Francisco *Chronicle*, June 24, 1887.

There had been appropriated in the winter \$7,500, making the total appropriations thus far up to the present session of the legislature, \$367,500!

WHAT IT COSTS EACH YEAR.

An examination of the appropriation for the year 1887 shows approximately the regular annual cost of the monopoly scheme to the State. The appropriation will probably not be so large another year, but the Managing Editor, at \$250 a month, is a fixed fact thus far, and if the Board continue to decide to make new books, the \$15,000 a year for compilation will be a regular item. The employes of the office cost \$104,000, and the stock and materials for printing and binding \$36,000. These three items are constant items of expense under this system, and will increase rather than diminish.

\$15,000 for compilation and revision.

104,000 for the employes.

36,000 for materials.

\$155,000 each year for expense of school-books for the State.

This is nearly four times the amount paid in 1883 for books bought in the open market, and is more than two times as much as the higher estimate made by the County Superintendents at their meeting in December, 1882, at which meet-

ing they investigated the subject of State supply, and passed resolutions unanimously opposing any such schemes.*

HOW THE STATE ESTABLISHMENT IS RUN.

After the passage of this second appropriation, the State Printer or the Board seems to have become alarmed at the enormous mass of books that had accumulated until the authorities feared for the safety of the Capitol building in which they were stored. They still had a few thousand dollars in the fund unused, but they dismissed the printers, compositors, binders, and all the miscellaneous crowd of porters, boys, and girls that had employment at public expense. But the State Printer was soon brought to a realizing sense of his situation. He found that this monopoly was not set up for him alone, but to furnish work to impecunious workmen who could not elsewhere find work. Public meetings were called at Sacramento and at San Francisco. These were reported in the papers. For some weeks the columns of the papers were frequently filled with accounts of meetings and committees of investigation appointed by irresponsible bodies. They called upon the true friends of public schools and the public press "to cry out from the house-top of public opinion" against

* See Proceedings of Second Biennial Convention of County Superintendents, December 27, 28, and 30, 1882.

this evident purpose to defeat and throttle the public will by stopping the work so long as there was a dollar in the public purse, whether the books were wanted or not. The Board and the Public Printer had to yield. Their position that the books were to be manufactured to meet a demand was manifestly inconsistent with the primary inception of the scheme. It was organized to tax the people and fleece them under pretext of delivering them from a great oppression. And if the larger public officers had fat places at liberal salaries continued, whether the people wanted them or not, why should the simple workmen be turned out? There was a manifest injustice.

The committee who were sent to investigate the stoppage, claimed that the law was passed at the request of the "Federated Trades," and that the stoppage was due to the "Book Ring," whatever that may be. They demanded that the Board should use the "means and funds at its disposal" to provide more books.* The Board did so. The money was duly expended.

NO GEOGRAPHY YET ISSUED.

The Board have not published a geography. They have never attempted such a book. It is manifestly beyond their ability. One member of the Board visited Eastern publishers in the en-

* *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 2, 1887, *Examiner*, March 22, March 25, and April 15, 1887.

deavor to buy a set of plates. On his return the Board received a proposition to enter a sort of "blind pool." They were to agree to adopt the geography that he should name on his conditions without his first telling either. The Board refused. It was strange; for this is precisely what the State has done with all the books thus far produced. No one knew or could know who was to write any of the books, and no one knew what they would cost. All they had was the delusive estimate of the State Printer, which bound him to nothing.

The result of the refusal is, that the State has no geography, and, probably, will not soon have one. It is not so easy even to make an *imitation* geography as it is to imitate a reader, a speller, or an arithmetic.

THE PROBABLE FUTURE.

The legislature of the State of California is now (February, 1889,) in session. The Governor in his inaugural address congratulated the State upon the success of the scheme. It is expedient that legislators shall have this impression, in order that the Public Printer may get the appropriations necessary in order that the work may be carried forward. The teacher-members of the State Board of Education now have not only their salaries as State officers, but are engaged as authors on the several books, and receive their

several shares of the appropriation. The amount thus expended from the appropriation of 1887 was \$15,000, as given above. So long as these gentlemen have hold of the public teat, they will not speak any evil of the scheme; but let a change of party control take place and it will be discovered that all that has been done must be done over again. The books are defective; they are partisan in their teaching and unfit for use. A new Board of Education will be selected, a new brood of nascent authors will snuggle up to the supply of golden "milk" from biennial appropriations, and the partisan and worthless books will be thrown aside for others equally worthless. The school-book business of the State has been thrown bodily into the whirlpool of party politics. The State Printing Office, with its horde of employes, including their relatives and dependents, must "fall into line" with the party in power, or seek employment elsewhere. With each change of party control or election of new officers, the State Printing Office will have a new head who will have to be taught, at the expense of the State, the whole trade of book-making. Under such a system, and with such probabilities, there can be no chance for cheapening the processes of manufacture or for making future supplies of the monopolistic books less expensive. The State has excluded competition by making use of other books illegal. Already the schools are buying other

books, however, which are being used, not to the exclusion of the State books, but in addition to them. The State books must be used to conform to the law; other books must be used to accomplish the practical ends of education.

SUMMARY.

Thus California has accomplished by law results which may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. An expenditure of an amount of money that, if invested at 7 per cent, would supply the State with the best selected text-books forever.
2. The preparation of a worthless set of books from the educational stand-point.
3. No saving of expense in the annual purchase of books, notwithstanding the enormous taxation; on the contrary, an increase by reason of the necessity for additional and better books.
4. It has been made the interest of the State Board, and of politicians who hope to get places in the Board, to continue the expenditure of large sums of money each year.
5. By the establishment of the scheme through a constitutional amendment, it can not be readily disposed of. It must remain and become a part of the spoils.





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